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ARMED FORCES MENU STANDARDS

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY, THE NAVY,
AND THE AIR FORCE

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SECTION	Page
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Armed Forces Menu Standards.....	2
III. Menu Planning Considerations.....	3
IV. Preparation and Serving Standards.....	3

Section I. INTRODUCTION

The menu is the basic building block of a food service program. It will determine the number and qualifications of personnel needed and the size and kind of facilities and equipment which are required for the program to work effectively and efficiently. All menu standards must be considered for implementation and the menu developed must reflect current standards. It is important to consider all factors in providing for an optimal menu.

To provide and ensure the nutritional adequacy of a menu the current guidance provided in the joint regulation, Army Regulation 40-25, Naval Medical Command Instruction 10110.1, and Air Force Regulation 160-95, Nutrition Allowances, Standards, and Education, May 1985 must be met. The Food Groups of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Home and Garden Bulletin No. 232, Second Edition 1985, will contribute to a nutritious food service program. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are the framework for the menu standards.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are summarized below:

a. EAT A WIDE VARIETY OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS. No single food/food item supplies all the essential nutrients (essential amino acids, carbohydrates, essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, water, and dietary fiber). A variety of foods must be offered to meet nutritional requirements. Daily servings from each of the Basic Four Food Groups of the USDA *Daily Food Guide* will provide diners with the required daily nutrients.

(1) *Meat, Poultry, Fish, or Eggs, in addition to Nuts and Bean Groups:* Two 2-oz servings daily. These foods supply iron, protein, certain vitamins, and phosphorous. This group includes beef, veal, pork, lamb, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, dried beans and peas, soybeans, lentils, seeds, nuts, peanuts and peanut butter.

(2) *Milk and Cheese Group:* Teenagers require daily at least four 8-oz glasses while adults require only two 8-oz glasses of milk. These foods are major sources of calcium, protein, and vitamins. This group includes milk (lowfat, skim, buttermilk, and whole), ice cream, yogurt, and cheese.

(3) *Vegetables and Fruit Group:* Four or more servings daily are required to include a serving of a citrus fruit, or vegetable rich in Vitamin C. This group provides Vitamins A and C, minerals, and dietary fiber. Dark green and deep yellow vegetables provide Vitamins A, C, and minerals. Citrus fruits, melons, berries, and tomatoes are good sources of

Vitamin C. Fresh fruits and vegetables also provide dietary fiber.

(4) *Breads and Cereals Group (enriched and whole grain):* Four servings daily. This group contains abundant sources of minerals and dietary fiber. Whole grain cereals, breads (wheat, rye, pumpernickel) and bread products, such as crackers, whole grain muffins, bagels, as well as rice, grits, oatmeal, pasta, and barley, are good examples of items which can be selected. To increase calories it is wise to select additional servings from the above groups.

(5) *Fats and Sweet Group:* There is no recommended number of servings for this group. These food items are low in nutrients and high in calories. They add only minimal amounts to the nutrient value of a meal. This group includes candy, sugar, jams and jellies, syrups, sugar sweetened beverages, salad dressings, margarine/butter, gravies, and vegetable oils. These foods may be ingredients in recipes, added to food during preparation, or added by the diner at the table.

b. MAINTAIN DESIRABLE WEIGHT. Obesity increases the development of chronic disorders. Obesity is associated with high blood pressure, increased levels of fat and cholesterol in the blood, as well as with heart disease, strokes, and diabetes. In order to lose weight, it is most important to take in fewer calories than are burned. Eat foods with fewer calories and increase physical activity.

c. AVOID TOO MUCH FAT, SATURATED FAT, AND CHOLESTEROL. When a high blood cholesterol level is present there is a greater chance of having a heart attack. Other risk factors are high blood pressure and cigarette smoking. To avoid too much fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, the following are recommendations for menu development. Select lean meat, fish, poultry, and dry beans and peas as protein sources; use skim or lowfat milk and lowfat milk products; moderate the use of egg yolks, organ meats, and fats and oils, especially those high in saturated fat (butter, cream, heavily hydrogenated fats, shortenings, and foods containing palm and coconut oils). Trim fat off meats. Broil, bake, simmer, steam or boil rather than fry foods. Moderate the use of deep fat fried foods.

d. EAT FOODS WITH ADEQUATE STARCH AND DIETARY FIBER. Complex carbohydrates, such as starches, have the same caloric content as simple carbohydrates, such as sugars. However, simple carbohydrates contain little or no vitamins and minerals. Foods high in starch, such as bread and other grain products, dry beans and peas, and potatoes, contain many of these essential nutrients. To eat more starch and dietary fiber, select whole grain

SB 10-262/NAVSUP Pub 516, Revision/AFR 146-3/MCO P10110135B

breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, and dry beans and peas. Substitute these foods for foods with large amounts of fats and sugars.

e. **AVOID TOO MUCH SUGAR.** Sugars provide calories but few other nutrients. It is impossible to avoid all sugar because most foods contain some sugar in one form or another. Keep the amount of sugar and sweet foods to a minimum. To avoid too much sugar, moderate use of sugar and foods containing large amounts of sugar, such as soft drinks, candies, pies, cakes, and cookies. Select fresh fruits or drained canned fruit as an alternative to pastries and other high sugar foods.

f. **AVOID TOO MUCH SODIUM.** Sodium is

present in many beverages and foods, especially in certain processed foods, condiments, sauces, pickled foods, salty snacks, and cured and processed meats. Consume high sodium foods in moderation. Examples include sausages (knockwurst, frankfurters), ham, pastrami, cold cuts, bacon, salty snack foods (potato and corn chips), pickles, sauerkraut, olives, condiments (soy and steak sauces).

g. **IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, DO SO IN MODERATION.** Even though alcoholic beverages are not served in dining facilities, general messes, and messhalls, it is necessary to emphasize that alcoholic beverages are high in calories and low in nutrients.

Section II. ARMED FORCES MENU STANDARDS

The following menu standards are provided to guide food service personnel in their efforts to guarantee that patrons of the dining facility, messhall and general mess are continually served acceptable, wholesome, nutritious and well-merchandised meals. These standards are not intended to restrict the food service officer's initiative in surpassing them where practicable.

I. General

a. Menus planned for weekdays, weekends, and all holidays should adhere to these standards.

b. Menu combinations offered at each meal will provide variety and contrast in texture, flavor, color, and be within prescribed DOD daily monetary food allowances.

c. Lowfat (two percent) milk will be the primary milk served in bulk milk dispensers. Whole, lowfat (one percent), skim, buttermilk, and lowfat (two percent) chocolate flavored milk may also be served as alternatives.

II. Breakfast

a. A choice of one or more unsweetened 100 percent natural juices and a choice of fresh fruit, whenever possible, or canned fruit will be offered. At least one choice will be high in Vitamin C.

b. A choice of at least four different ready-to-eat cereals will be offered; of the four, one should be unsweetened, and whole grained. Hot cereal, which includes hominy grits, will be offered at least once a week. Additional servings may be offered.

c. Eggs to order will be offered. Eggs prepared without fat, such as, poached, soft, and hard cooked eggs will be offered.

d. Pancakes, French toast, or waffles will be offered daily.

e. At least one breakfast meat will be offered daily.

~~f. Potatoes may be served three times a week or based on customer demand.~~

g. Toast (whenever possible) will be served daily; whole grain bread, rolls, or muffins should be provided as a choice.

h. Spreads, such as butter and/or margarine, and a variety of jams, jellies, preserves, and peanut butter will be offered daily.

i. Lowfat (two percent) milk, coffee, and tea will be offered. Cocoa and other types of milk will be served to the degree required by customer requests.

j. Where feasible, Continental/Breakfast Bar/ "Fitness" Bar breakfasts will be served daily, in addition to the regular breakfast.

III. Short Order/Speed Line

a. Soup and salad will be offered daily.

b. A variety of hot and cold sandwiches or other suitable short order or speedline entrees, including a reduced calorie menu choice, should be offered daily.

c. A potato or potato substitute should be served to provide the diner a lower fat and sodium choice.

d. A salad bar should be available at each meal. When this is not possible, a choice of at least two salads will be offered at each meal; one will be a raw, leafy, green vegetable, whenever possible. The selection of salads for each meal will be varied to avoid repetitious servings of the same salad. Two or more salad dressings will be offered on the salad bar at every short order/speed line meal. At least, one low calorie salad dressing will be offered.

e. A choice of two or more desserts will be offered at each meal. In the interest of weight control, offer half portions of cakes and pies; offer at least one unfrosted, unglazed cake which may be dusted with powdered sugar. Fresh and/or canned fruit will be offered as a dessert choice at each meal.

~~f. Lowfat (two percent) milk, soft drinks, unsweetened beverages, coffee, or tea will be offered at each meal.~~

SB 10-262/NAVSUP Pub 516, Revision/AFR 146-3/MCO P10110135B

IV. Lunch and dinner meals (does not include the short order/speed line meal).

- a. A choice of two different types of entrees should be offered to every customer. Avoid having more than deep fat fried entree daily.
- b. Using sound menu practices, attention will be given to the spacing of menu entrees to avoid repetition of similar items.
- c. When one entree choice is a cold meat platter, a cold sliced lean roast meat, such as, turkey, chicken, beef, pork, or ham will be included.
- d. An appropriate sauce or gravy will be served as an optional accompaniment to an entree.
- e. Potatoes and/or a potato substitute will be offered at each meal to complement the entrees. The exceptions are entrees that contain pasta, rice or potatoes, such as Lasagna and Chicken Vega. One nonfried potato or potato substitute should be offered as a choice.
- f. Two cooked vegetables should be served in addition to the potato or potato substitute. The exceptions are meals with entrees containing vegetables (beef stews, pot pies, tacos). One vegetable may be served with entrees of this type.
- g. Not more than one gas-forming cooked vegetable such as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, onions, Brussels sprouts, and dried beans and peas will be offered per meal.

h. A salad bar should be available at each meal. When this is not possible, a choice of at least two salads will be offered at each meal; one will be a raw leafy green vegetable, whenever possible. The selection of salads for each meal will be varied to avoid repetitious serving of the same salads. Two or more salad dressings will be offered on the salad bar at every lunch and dinner meal. At least, one low calorie salad dressing will be offered.

i. One whole grain bread, roll, muffin, or biscuit will be served at each meal, whenever possible.

j. Bread spreads such as butter and/or margarine, and a variety of jams, jellies, preserves, and peanut butter, as authorized, will be offered at each meal.

k. At least one soup will be offered daily. A different type of soup will be served for the second meal when two soups are offered on the day's menu. Soup ingredients should differ from other menu selections of the meal.

l. A choice of two or more different types of desserts will be offered at each meal. In the interest of weight control, offer half portions of cakes and pies; offer at least one unfrosted, unglazed cake which may be dusted with powdered sugar. Fresh and/or canned fruits will be offered as a dessert choice at each meal.

m. Lowfat (two percent) milk, soft drinks, unsweetened beverages, coffee, and tea will be offered at each meal.

Section III. MENU PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Other factors which must be considered when planning a menu: availability and cost of menu items, personnel and equipment limitations, logistics and supply, texture, color, flavor, variety, and acceptability.

The use of the Armed Forces Recipe Service is required. In addition, the use of proper food service procedures for food preparation, sanitation, and mer-

chandising will produce highly acceptable products.

Post the current daily menu where it may be easily read by the diner.

Reduced calorie menu selections should be offered and should be posted, except where serving line constraints or unique mission requirements make this impractical.

Section IV. PREPARATION AND SERVING STANDARDS

The procedures to be used in the preparation of meals in each dining facility, messhall, and general mess are as follows:

- a. The Armed Forces Recipe Service will be used in food preparation.
- b. Excessive fat will be trimmed from meats.
- c. A nonfried entree will be offered as an alternative when a fried entree is featured.
- d. Reduced portion sizes will be available at each meal.
- e. One cooked vegetable, prepared without margarine, butter, sauces, or gravies, will be offered as a choice.

f. At least one low calorie salad dressing or lemon wedge should be available as required.

g. One lower calorie dessert such as: fresh fruit, plain or whipped gelatin without topping, plain cake without frosting, or sherbet will be available at each lunch and dinner.

h. Lowfat (two percent) milk, skim milk, or buttermilk will be available daily at each meal.

i. One natural or unsweetened juice or fresh fruit will be offered daily at breakfast.

j. Soft, hard cooked or poached egg or plain omelet, prepared with a minimum amount of fat, will be offered at breakfast.

SB 10-262/NAVSUP Pub 516, Revision/AFR 146-3/MCO P10110135B

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